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BOOK REVIEW

THORSON, GUNNAR. 1971. *Life in the Sea*. World University Library, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, Toronto, 256 pp., numerous illustrations. \$2.45.

This beautifully illustrated book was designed to introduce the non-professional reader to some of the fascinating aspects of marine life. The book outlines the basic concepts of marine biology and makes them vivid through the inclusion of numerous intriguing examples.

Part I of the book, after a brief discussion of the physical and chemical nature of the oceans, gives a very general account of the various kinds of plants and animals which make up the plankton, nekton and benthos. There is also a discussion of the various light zones and the communities which typify them. Part II is a more detailed discussion of the different habitats found in the ocean, from the supralittoral to the deep-sea benthic. Here the animals and plants of the various ecologic communities are discussed in more detail; the behavior and interactions of species are also described. Throughout the book, classic experiments which resolved important questions are included to give the reader an insight into the nature of scientific research. In addition to the interesting and smoothly reading text, Dr. Thorson has included numerous informative photographs, figures and diagrams.

This book does not pretend to provide a systematic and complete account of ocean life. General invertebrate taxonomy is largely ignored; although binomial nomenclature

is used consistently, higher scientific taxa, including phyla, are for the most part omitted. For example, when discussing arrow worms, the phylum Chaetognatha is never mentioned. An appendix with a basic classification scheme would have been helpful for those interested in the phylogenetic relationships among the invertebrates.

The scope of the book is broad, and by necessity coverage of many areas is superficial. Yet these limitations did not prevent Dr. Thorson from creating a book which will stimulate the student to further explore the realm of marine biology.

— N. Knowlton